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Obedience and Beneficence.

OR, THE
Excellency and Serviceableness
OF THE
Christian Ministry,

To secure the Peace and Happiness of
Mankind, by jointly promoting the Du-
ties of Superiours and Inferiours.

Set forth in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Right Rev^d Father in God,

E D M U N D,

Lord Bishop of L O N D O N;

At His Lordship's Triennial Visitation of the
Clergy at *Colchester*, May 12. 1727. K

By WILLIAM CURTIS, M. A. Vicar of *Dovercourt*
in *Essex*, and Rector of *Kettlebaston* in *Suffolk*.

L O N D O N:

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OF THE
Excellency and Serviceableness

THE O
Christians Ministry

to secure the Peace and Happiness of
the World by every promoting the
line of Supremacy and Intercourse.

3 E. R. M. O. N.

1800



EDWARD M. D.

Lord Bishop of E. & W. D. N.;

At the London Convention of the
Christ Church, 1847.

BRITISH INDIAN COAST GUARD

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I PET. ii. 15.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish Men.



THESE Words, with others in the Context, seem to have been deliver'd by way of Advice upon Complaint made, and Consultation had in a Point of great consequence and importance to the regular Progress of Christianity: The Elect, to whom the Epistle was wrote, were Strangers that had embraced the Faith in the Churches of *Pontus and Galatia, Asia, Cappadocia, and Bythinia*, Provinces of the *Roman Empire*, to which the *Jews* were justly look'd upon to be no stedfast Friends. Witness, that ensnaring Question of theirs to our Saviour concerning the Tribute; and their more open Opposition afterwards to their Governours, which cost them their City and Temple, and the loss of all that they held dear to them.

It was upon the Account of these refractory People that the Disciples of the Cross met with so very ill Treatment at their first setting forth into the World, as being wrongfully supposed to be of the like perverse and stubborn Disposition with the unbelieving *Israelites*; though their religious Views and moral Principles were widely different from
 Tim. i. 7. the other, *being led by the Spirit of Love and of a sound Mind.*

Thus it came to pass, that whilst they were wholly taken up in following their blessed Master's Instructions, informing the Ignorant, cloathing the Naked, and shewing the excellency and sincerity of their Faith by the serviceableness of their Works; they were industriously represented by their Enemies of the Heathenish Perswasion, as forming a Party against the Civil Establishment, and teaching the ordinary People to aim at high Things, and forsake the Order and Relations that Providence had placed them under, to the manifest Disturbance of human Society, wherever they got footing.

This indeed was an Accusation as heavy and grievous as it was false and groundless, and such as the Christian Community could by no means remain easy under; for such mistaken Notions must needs alarm the temporal Powers, and bring on what was spoken of the holy *Jesus* by *Simeon* the Prophet,
 Luk. ii. 24. *Behold this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against.*

In such an Exigency (possibly) some of these Converts might address themselves to St. Peter for direction upon the Case, in Words of this import: "Blessed Apostle of our Lord, who perfectly understandest his Will, say how shall we demean our selves so as the good we do may be well spoken of; direct us to the fairest and most effectual Method to wipe off this unjust Calumny, and preserve our selves in the good liking of those for whom we retain the greatest Veneration and Esteem; teach us above all to walk unblameably in the Sight of him who is higher than the highest, and no respecter of Persons: To whom after this transient Scene is ended, and all distinctions cease, but those of Good and Evil, every Man shall give an Account, and receive his final Allotment according as he has squared his Principles and Actions in Regularity or Disobedience.

The Apostle gives a clear direction upon it that fully comprehends the Case. *I beseech you Brethren as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from filthy lusts, that war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of Visitation. Submit your selves to every Ordinance of man for the Lord's Sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governours as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and the*
praise

praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to Silence the ignorance of foolish Men.

The Sense of Instruction this Scripture affords is, that if we will consult the genuine Spirit and influence of our holy Religion, we shall find that there is in it, besides a tender supply for all that are in Want, a duty also and decency enjoined, toward Preheminency and all lawful Authority, be it in Church or State; this must lead on, regulate, and inspire all our other Designs of publick Benificence, or secret labour of Love; if Christians would adhere to the Example and Precepts of their Lord and Master, and so pass the Stage of this troublesome World, that their vertuous Actions may appear irreproachably bright, and charm the Beholders into an Imitation of the same perfect Rule; they must first of all be given to good *Works*. But then care must be taken that they be well spoken of; the due Exercise and Performance of them must be in such manner regulated, as to be consistent with and promoting of the Security and Peace of the Government we live under, and agreeable to the righteous Designs of those exalted to a Sphere above us, favouring the great Work they have in hand, which the Text

Verse 14. informs us, *is the punishment of evil doers and the praise of them that do well.* In few Words, we must ever be mindful to recommend our beneficence by a steady Allegiance; and whilst we are intent on well-doing in
all

all the instances of Charity and Love, *submit our selves unto every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.* Verse 13.

These important regards are linkt and associate to the nature of things, as well as by the Precepts of revealed Religion; and *what God hath thus joyned let no man put asunder.*

To preserve and strengthen this Union, I shall beg leave to comprise at once and with a mutual Aspect, the Duties we owe both to our Superiours and Inferiours, both here described and represented in the Originals, *ἐν ᾧ* and *ἀλλήλων*, and shew how it is the Will of God that we bear a strict regard in our Practice to both of them conjoynedly taken, that they do not interfere or hinder each other.

II. *Secondly*, I shall point out and display the reasonableness and strictness of the Obligations after the same Method. And,

III. *Thirdly*, For a standing and sufficient Motive to support and encourage such a decorous and benevolent Deportment, I shall discover the great Honour it reflects upon the Christian Religion, by confounding the worst Objection that was ever formed against it, and putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Under every Article as we proceed, we shall have ground to Contemplate *this grace wherein we stand*: And observe the Excellency and Dignity, the Office and Authority of that Profession, whose more immediate business it is, who have it given them in Charge,

Charge, and esteem it the chief Employment and Happiness of their lives to cultivate and enforce these social Duties.

I. For the Will of our great Creator, who
 Acts xvii. *made of one blood all the nations* upon Earth,
 26. and determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitations: The Paternal and Magisterial Authority arose from the Reason of Things, and the Order and Station wherein they individually rang'd and took their Places at the beginning of the World. And as Mankind multiply'd and replenish'd the Earth, they were invited for their mutual security to incorporate into States and civil Societies, and bind themselves by joint consent to adhere to their Rulers and Guides, and be subservient and assistant to one another.

So that there was a Combination and Subordination in human Affairs laid and established by Wisdom and Providence before any written Revelation of the Will of God came forth to make the Bonds more strict and sacred for all good Offices; which is the proper Work and Notion of *Religion*. By this, Subjects are instructed in their Duties, first to God, and then to his Vicegerent, and not to resist his Ordinance. By this, the Overseers of the Household of God, and those *that*
 Tim. 5. *rule well are to be counted worthy of double*
 7. *honour*, and to be remembred and followed in the Faith, because they speak *unto*
 Heb. 13. 7 *you the word of God*; and so in all other Respects, and by the most solemn Injunctions,
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all the relative Duties of Society from the lowest to the highest, and so again in the descent are made inviolable by the commandment of God, which is too evident to be enlarged upon.

Pass we on therefore to attend to another Notification of the Will of God for the rule and guidance of our Lives; which is, that we should be daily conversant in Well-doing: *Wilt thou not be afraid of the power* (says the Apostle)? *do that which is good* Rom. 13³ *and thou shalt have praise of the same.* Zeal without Knowledge or Benevolence, will have no laudable Influence or Effect.

But without Controversy, he is the best Member of Society that studies to make himself the most eminent and useful in his Place, by conferring Kindnesses and good Turns to all about him, adding to the publick Stock as much as in him lies.

And that this is conform and agreeable to the Will of God, appears from the qualifications and conduct of all that ever we read to be high and eminent in his Favour; to whom every delegation of Power, was always attended with a proportionable emanation of Goodness; *for as his Majesty is, so is his mercy.* Ecclus. 11¹⁸

The greatest Elevation of all noble and sublime Endowments is among those that stand before the presence of the most High God, *whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all created by him and for him,* Colos. 1¹⁶ that never resisted his Will at any time; yet high and glorious Intel-

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ligences

ligences as they be, whose agency extendeth over the Orbs and Regions of Light, and a greater part of the Immense Creation than we can comprehend at present, they abound with such Goodness and Condescension as to exercise an intendency over our Affairs, *and minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.*

Heb. i. 14.

The highly honourable among Men, the civil Magistrate, supreme or subordinate, is also *the minister of God to us for good.*

Rom. xiii.

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181. mor

And to prosper and promote this great Work, and that all Generations may know what is the Will of our Lord Christ, in

Heb. v. 1.

founding his Church upon Earth he hath ordained for men in things pertaining unto God a Royal Priesthood, a Ministry, whose Charter is his Gospel, containing Directions to them for the due discharge of their Commission; and to the rest, how they must demean themselves under them, with submission to

2 Cor. v.

29.

their Authority, as the *Embassadors of Christ*; with a deference and respect to their Office,

1 Pet. iv. 2.

as *taking the oversight of the flock of Christ with a ready mind*; with love and veneration for their Persons, as those that are appointed to watch over their Souls, with gratitude and observance for their Labours,

2 Thes. v.

13.

esteeming them very highly for their works sake.

Every thing that the Honour and Support of Government requires! enough to satisfy any unprejudiced Person that the Church of Christ is a State Spiritual; and He the Supreme Head has invested the Administrators thereof with a just and competent Authority,

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to answer the ends of Spiritual Government, viz. to direct the Doubtful or Erroneous, to comfort the Weak and Feeble-hearted, to encourage the Vertuous or Penitent; and rebuke and restrain the Gainsayers, *and preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.*

This is undeniably clear, not only from the Nature and Institution of such a Society, but from the Strength and Tendency of these Relations therein, of Inferiority and Superiority mutually asserting each other. A Ruler without a District, and certain Persons in peculiar Cases to rule over, is a mock Power; and such to be Instituted by our Saviour, and left without any Energy or Sphere of Action, is a Suggestion highly Impious and Absurd. And if every private Christian, as you see, and will be hereafter explain'd, be under manifold Obligations of Obedience in Spirituals as well as Temporals, there must be some authoriz'd Person for them to operate towards, otherwise they would be vain and causlessly laid, which is contrary to all Religion and Piety.

For if a Man be enjoined Obedience to another, and he be not his proper Superior, and have a right to claim and demand it of him in requisite Cases, then may he, if he pleases, withhold his Submission, or if he bestows it 'twill fall but upon his Equals or Inferiors, which must create a medley of Confusion. As to the height and extent of this Authority, for there the main Jealousy lies, there can be no just Apprehension or

Fear so long as it remains founded upon the solid Basis of well-doing. Every good Man
 Rom. xiii. 2. *(the terror belonging only to evil doers)* surely would rejoyce rather to live under the Instruction, the Jurisdiction, the Discipline of a Power set apart for no other ends but the Services of Truth and Righteousness, Unity and Peace; whose constant Charge and Office is to put the People in mind to be *subject to principalities and powers*, to make
 Tit. iii. 1. *supplications, prayers, and thanksgivings for all men: for kings, and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*
 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, 3.

In short, the Christian Ministry was Instituted with no other Design in the world, but to make the World better, and smoothe out a more secure and peaceful Passage to heavenly Rest and Felicity.

To conclude this Point; It is certainly the Will of God that all Men, whatsoever their Station and Calling be, must employ their Abilities in well-doing. Beneficence is a general Vertue, *the poor we have always with us*, and God has implanted in every human Breast a generous Propensity to assist all that chance to fall below the common level of Felicity: Every Superiority in Knowledge, Riches, Post, or Power, implies such Tenderness and Care; in just Reason it is expected, that the any ways Exalted should delight thus to distinguish themselves, by adorning
 their

their Stations with Works of Charity and Love, *feeding the household of God.* Blessed Luke xii. are those servants whom the Lord shall find 38. so doing.

A Day will come, after we shall have been all level'd in the Grave, and nothing but our Works can follow us, when it will more clearly appear who has fulfill'd the Will of God, and who has acted contrary to it; then a grand enquiry will be made, who has farthered, and who has obstructed the Interests of Mercy and Peace. In the mean time, this is the foundation of our Hope, and this we must affirm constantly, *that he that believeth in God must be careful to maintain good works:* To do good therefore, and to Tit. iii. 8. communicate, forget not: for with such Heb. xiii. 16. sacrifices God is well pleased. And if ye know John xiii. 17. the will of God, happy are ye if ye do it. Not seperately and by halves, but the whole Will of God, in all the main Instances of Duty. A Christian Subject must not think to make himself acceptable with God, or considerable among Men, by a warm Zeal in one Point, and as cold a Neglect of the other. *These things you ought to have done, and not have left the other undone;* well-serving and well-doing ought not to jostle and exclude each other, but both go hand in hand together in the Christian Race; and whilst we *Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,* we must *give unto God the things that are God's,* and see that his Poor and Needy have Right. The Connexion
ought

bought to be kept up with inviolable care; because the Christian Graces never appear so amiable and inviting as when they reflect a Lustre upon each other by shining forth in one bright Constellation.

II. Which leads me to speak more particularly to the obligations all lovers of Peace and their own Security, are under to the conscientious Practice and Discharge of these Duties.

Man being a social Creature of great Industry, and seated in the midst of other active Beings, and qualified in his place to be both the Object and Distributer of Goodness and Power, and to consult his own jointly with the Interest and Welfare of his fellow Subjects: He is referred to learn Submission of his elder Brethren, those holy Angels that have kept their first Habitation, and never resisted the Will of their heavenly Father at any time; but for Beneficence, we are bid to take Pattern of him, after whose Image we are made, and *be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful.*

Luke vi.
36.

Jude 8.

But on the contrary, to delight in Enmity and Discord, to *despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities*, to be averse to all the satisfaction and pleasure of a mild and equitable Government; to shew no respect to the Excellent and Illustrious, nor bear any kind Inclinations to those in Circumstances below us; but take delight in their Miseries; is the real Temper and Disposition, the accursed Pravity and Guilt of the Devils themselves,

selves, who are cast down from the Communion of amicable Spirits, and Condemned to *the blackness of darkness for ever.* Jude 13.

The very Dignity therefore of our Nature, if we duly regard it, and desire to live up to it, is enough to preserve Unity and Order, and to retain Men in the interest of Peace and Benignity.

The love of our Country, is another of the Cords of a Man, that may help to strengthen the Obligation.

Our Blessed Saviour's Observation, that a *house or kingdom divided against it self, can never stand,* was verified in that very Empire to which he was Subject, which so long as Unity and Order were observed, and Men contained themselves within the Rules and Duties of their peculiar Stations, grew exceeding Strong, and subdued the Nations upon Earth before it: But when Ambition and Covetousness carry'd Men headlong, and the misunderstandings among the Great Ones, involved the common People in Divisions and Animosities; the Foundation of Peace and Concord being destroyed, the mighty Building totter'd a while, and at length fell, and was lost and buried in its own Ruins. Mark iii. 24.

Nothing is more lovely, nothing more uniform and compact, than the face of the Publick, whilst a publick Spirit prevails and Men put on contented Looks and kind Affections; which will spirit and unite their Endeavours to design and accomplish all that may contribute to the safety and advantage of the Constitution

tution in every branch of it. Then you may see pious Provision made for the Worship of God, Churches erected and endowed, Charity-Schools set up and founded every where for the vertuous Education of Youth, Hospitals raised and employed for the Sick and Needy, and even comfort in store for the poor Incurables: And all this directed and establish'd by the act of Sovereign Power, so as never to be Abolish'd or Abused.

Whilst the wholesome effects of Amity and Brotherly-kindness are thus universally display'd, with the utmost Lustre and Advantage, how beauteous and joyous is the Spectacle! How bright, how attractive the Charms, *when mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other!* But above all, most strictly does our holy Religion enforce these Duties of Men in Covenant with God and one another, by Bonds that are not to be broken.

When the glad Tidings of the Gospel was brought down from Heaven, by the Ministry of Angels, What did they proclaim and publish, but *glory to God most high, and on earth peace and good will towards men!* The welfare of all Civil-Societies, Families, or States, was never placed upon so sure a Foundation, as when they became Christian, and when the Kingdom of Heaven was taken into the Scheme, and People were taught to attain the Glories of the other World, by living orderly and usefully in this, under exact Conformity to the Example and Precepts of the
Cap

Captain of their Salvation, the Prince of Peace.
 Who was without Guile, and in all his Relations
 perform'd a perfect and unfinning Obedience.
 Whilst he was Young, he was subject to his
 Parents, and *increased in wisdom and in stature,* Luke i
and in favour both with God and man. 52. During
 his Ministration he ever paid the due defe-
 rence to those in Authority; the Scribes and
 Pharisees that sat in *Moses's Chair*, though none
 of the best of Men, and whose Vices he some-
 times took occasion to reprove. He was at the
 expence of a Miracle, rather than *Cesar's Tri-*
bute should be unpay'd; and at last was obedi-
 ent even unto Death, *witnessing a good confession* 1 Tim. vi
before Pontius Pilate the Governour: And for 13.
 his Life, it was one continued exercise of Bene-
 ficence, *he went about doing good.* He had in-
 deed, of his own, a Name and Supremacy, far
 above all Earthly Powers; and Kings and
 Counsellors came and Worshipped, and brought
 Presents to him at his Birth. But that he might
 create no Apprehensions in the temporal Pow-
 ers, but of his Wrath for Sin, he declared that
 his *kingdom was not of this world*; not calcu-
 lated to make any Infringement or Alteration
 in any ones legal Rights; but to prevail only
 by the irresistible Power of Truth, and Charms
 of Goodness, and a supernatural Assistance.
 When he sent forth his Apostles to Disciple
 and Convert the World, he arm'd them with
 no other Instruction but this, *be ye wise as ser-* Marth. x.
pents, and harmless as Doves. 16. He rebuked the
 hasty Brothers, who would have call'd down
 Fire from Heaven; by saying, *Ye know not* Luke ix.
what manner of spirit ye are of. For the son of 55.
 man

man is not come to destroy many lives, but to save them. They are his true Disciples, who love one another; who are ever diligent in Cultivating those Graces that are essential to the Gospel; *you may know them by their fruits:* On the contrary, let them be who they will, and call themselves by what sacred Name they please, even that of the Holy Jesus himself, they are no Society of his Instituting; those turbulent and unruly Folk, that are continually sowing Sedition, whose Work and Business it is to dissolve those Bands that hold Mankind in order; making it dangerous for Magistrates to use the Sword, and put the Laws in Execution; and unsafe to Worship God according to the light of Scripture and Conscience. Thanks be to the good Providence, that they are at present so far removed from us, and we from them, as never more, we trust, to annoy this happy Isle. *For we have not so learned Christ Jesus; having received the ministration, not of condemnation, but of edification, and such as is profitable unto all.* An Office and Direction not to break in upon the well-settled Tranquility and reasonable Satisfaction of Mankind; but to plant Truth and Felicity, where it is not, and to establish every good word and work. These are the powerful Obligations that rest upon us as Men, Inhabitants of this good Land, but expectants of a better Country, Members of the Church; and give me leave to add, more especially, the Ministers thereof, thus to persevere to the end of our Days in receiving rich Benefits from those Above, and Conveying all the Advantages we can to those Beneath us;

obey-

obeying well and doing well, according to the Glory and Vertue to which we are called.

We have nothing farther to observe concerning these mutual Offices, but as they lovingly twine together, so they proceed from the same pure and uncorrupted Fountain, a Consideration of the Will of God, and sincere Obedience to his Institution; to be lowly and observant to our Superiours, because they are his Vicegerents; and to be kind and liberal to our Inferiours, because they are his Substitutes, and the good that is done to them in his Name, he will place it to his own Account. An equal danger lies, lest the ascending Branch should luxuriate into Ostentation, and the descending degenerate into Selfishness, which will bereave them both of their Excellency and Praise. The safest reliance may be laid upon those that are solicitous about every thing that belongs to good Offices, but the Praise of Men and temporary Rewards. The River sustains the greatest Burden where it glides silently within its Banks; and the largest Alms are discover'd without sound of *Trumpet*. A true publick Spirit and uncorrupt Integrity commands the Respect it aspires not after; and the World 'tis to be hoped will become at length so Wise, as to distinguish the Corn from the Dross; and make well-doing the Test of well-affectedness, and judge of Mens Faith by their Works; ever esteeming him the best Citizen and Subject, that most diligently discharges the Duties of his Place, and is just and faithful in all his Relations. Let commendable Actions flow from religious Principles, love to the goodness of

God, fear to violate his Precepts, faith in his Promises, hope in his Mercies, and bright and fervent Charity towards all Men; and then *our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* gñi

III. Besides a most desirable and extensive Advantage will attend it (for it is time now to come to what is pleaded in the Text, by way of Motive, for the joint Practice of these Duties) in the Honour that will hereby redound to the holy Religion we profess, in vindicating the Peaceableness and Purity thereof, and *putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

'Tis a Calumny of long standing, and as ill contrived as it is malicious; this, of arraying the Christian Scheme in so savage a Dress, as if it was injurious to the Rights and Privileges of Mankind, and destructive of the Peace and Welfare of civil Society; and yet, so apt to prevail, that at *Thessalonica* the whole People took this alarm, and cry'd out, *Those that have turn'd the world up side down are come hither also.* How foul an Aspersions was this upon those Embassadors of Peace? And therefore no wonder the Primitive Apologists took such an exceeding Care to clear the Innocency of Christ's Flock and the Pastors thereof, from any imputation of that eriminous Nature.

When *Celsus*, the bitterest Enemy of the Cross of Christ, basely reproach'd his Disciples for interfering with that indispensable Loyalty they owed to the National Establish-

Origen *Contra celsum*
page 115.

Ignatius,
Ep 3d. ad
Magnesia

ment: Origen challenges him to prove one Instance, *ἔδει γὰρ σάτερος ἔργον ἐπιδείξαι δουλοῦναι.* And the Apostolical *Ignatius*, founds Episcopal Obedience upon the very Essence of Christianity,

stianity, *οὐδέποτε ἐν ἐστί μὴ μόνον καλεῖσθαι Χριστι-
 αῖνες ἀλλὰ καὶ εἶναι.* *Minutus Felix* declares in * Pag
 all their Names, that the Offices of a good ^{126.}
 Life were what they labour'd to distinguish
 themselves by; * *non Eloquimur Magna sed Vi-
 vimus.* Thus Truth and the light of Things,
 soon wore off the Blemish, and upon a full
 and fair Experience the Gospel was found to
 bear the most favourable and most benevolent
 Aspect upon the Affairs of Families and States
 of any moral or religious System the World
 ever saw; insomuch, that the Kings and Rulers
 of the Earth, soon embraced the Yoke of Christ,
 and became Nursing Fathers and Nursing Mo-
 thers to his Church. The first erection of it
 was indeed the Occasion, but not the Cause
 of much Contention, as our Lord foretold.
 While his Servants were intent in setting up
 his Kingdom, neglecting their worldly Affairs,
 and even Life it self, for the sake of it, others
 were as resolute in opposing and pulling it
 down. Perils arose from the Rage and Perse-
 cution of a wicked World, and from the strug-
 gle of Prejudice and Vice against Truth and
 Holiness. But when the Branch sprang up
 from the root of Jesse, the Gentiles rejoiced in
 the Shadow of it, and all *remainder of wrath*
was restrained, and the prospect became ex-
 ceeding Uniform and Calm. And thus it con-
 tinued, till, by the just Judgment of God up-
 on the Impieties of a corrupt Age, way was
 made for such a torrent of Ignorance and Su-
 perstition, as darkned and deformed the face
 of Christendom, and carried things back almost
 to Heathenism again: Saint and Angel Wor-
 ship

Rom. xv.

20.

Psal. lxxvi.

10.

ship was set up in Rivalship to God's; *the king was no longer own'd supreme*, as the Apostle here enjoins, but an Usurpation made upon the Civil Power, which supported it self by Tyranny and Fraud. Hence came strange and pernicious Doctrines, new Sacraments, and instead of the ancient wholesome Discipline, which compleated the Slavery, a cruel Inquisition *was set up*; People were not permitted a reasonable Service, nor suffer'd to understand their very Prayers, and what was yet worse, they were deny'd the Key of Heavenly Knowledge, and that Word which by God's Blessing is alone able to make them Wise and Holy here and eternally Happy in the World to come, was kept from *them*: *The foundations being thus destroy'd, what could the righteous do?* It is however a pious Satisfaction to recollect, that our blessed Reformers restor'd primitive Christianity after the same manner by which it first Establish'd itself, in strict and peaceful compliance with all Authority both Human and Divine. But like the first Propagators of our holy Faith, they had this Objection to encounter with, as if they were avowed Enemies to both. It was flung in their way by the *Romanists*, who of all People in the World had the least reason to bring the Charge, being so notoriously deficient in Point of Loyalty *themselves*. The excellent Defender of our Church, after having sufficiently retorted the Objection against themselves, and reckon'd up their traiterous Positions, and the horrible Disturbances they have produced in the World, and shewn the unhappiness of the People that live where such pernicious Doctrines

and

Psalm. xi.
3.

Bishop
Jewel's
Defens.
Eccles.
Angl.

and Principles prevail, concludes, *Hæc est professio, hæc sunt instituta nostra.* This is what we Profess and Practice, to obey Princes as Persons sent from God. The Light of History and constant evidence of Fact, with a Tenderness and Impartiality that always accompanies just Command, have prevented its working the intended Effect: and as often as it has been made, learned Men have stood up and shewn it to proceed from the same virulent Quiver, or another that has been under the same Condemnation. And they indeed justly, but to lay any such thing to the Charge of the Members or Ministers of this holy Communion, as such, as if they should be any ways averse to the vigilant Administration of a righteous Government, supporting and supported by the Laws of God and Man, and the Welfare of the People. Not to say any thing of the Maliciousness and Foolishness of it, is an Accusation that must proceed from a wilful and criminal Ignorance of the frame of our Constitution, the tenure of our Articles, the import of our Worship, and all our most deliberate and willing Engagements, to keep *a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man.*

They that would insinuate the possibility of a Violation of these, ought seriously to weigh the unfairness of the Attempt, and how much they will have to answer for, in lessening the Respect, and consequently weakning the Labours of those that are employed in quite different Purposes from what they would have believed.

But however, it may please God to suffer our Adversaries to prevail in any particular Case, by causeless and unjust Reproaches, their usual Arts,

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we can have recourse to no more solid Rock of Defence under Providence, than what the Apostle here refers us to, *viz.* the patient continuance of Well-doing. They must be very wicked and perverse indeed, who persist to cast disesteem upon those they perceive intent on the most endearing Offices to Mankind in their everlasting Concerns. *For who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good.* The main Foundations of Righteousness, Peace and Obedience, being thus secured, let us strive to adorn and benefit the Doctrine and Community we belong to, by such a faithful adherence to the one, and care of the other, as may best reconcile the Minds of those who differ from us, and recommend the Excellency of our Faith, by the integrity of our Conversation. *So let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.* And, as our Apostle concludes his Advice, *Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king.* Let the same Mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who hath taught us, that it is far more blessed to give than to receive, and shut not up your Bowels of Compassion to the Poor; for though they cannot recompence us, yet we shall be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just. Even in this uncertain State, Charity that seeketh not her own, shall find much good, and Peace shall arise to them that love Peace. We shall thus engage the Benefits of Heaven to those whom Heaven delights to Honour, and their Favour and Blessing will descend like the Dew upon the most Lowly and less deserving.

Bless me, even me also O my Father.

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